

difficulty which the deputy leader has inferred. I just want to be enlightened; that is all.

Senator Doody: I can quite understand that. I have been told that the decision of the Chair respecting the procedural discussion we had yesterday with regard to Senator Graham's motion may be deferred until a later date; in other words, it may not be given today. In light of the fact that it was suggested yesterday that we might return last night to hear the decision, if it was ready, it seemed to me that it might be just as appropriate to return tomorrow or Monday or whenever. I am not suggesting that we do that. I am simply saying that we should leave open the option to do so, if the Senate desires to return or His Honour has his decision ready.

Hon. Charles McElman: You said that with a straight face, too. What did it mean?

The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore: Honourable senators, I was absent yesterday. When I arrived this morning, I was asked to chair the sitting this afternoon. I looked into the proceedings of yesterday. A very serious point of order was raised during the session yesterday. I have not had time to look into the citations given by Senator MacEachen, Senator Flynn and Senator Stewart about the acceptability of the motion of Senator Graham. I ask your indulgence. I will not be able to give my decision this afternoon. Over this coming weekend I want to study the precedents cited yesterday, and I will be in a position to give you my decision at the sitting next Tuesday afternoon.

Senator MacEachen: Honourable senators, I do not know whether it is appropriate to make any comments at this stage, but I must make a comment based upon what occurred in the Senate yesterday, namely, that the Honourable the Acting Speaker stated as follows:

Honourable senators, Senator Flynn has asked the Chair to rule on the acceptability of this motion.

That is in accordance with the facts. He went on to say:

I will consider the point raised by Senator Flynn and that raised by Senator MacEachen and will rule later.

So it was my expectation that the Acting Speaker, who was in the Chair with full authority, and who had heard the argument, would make the ruling. I then asked as follows:

Honourable senators, are we to take it that we will get the ruling tomorrow, or will we return this evening for it?

The Hon. the Acting Speaker replied:

The ruling will not be given tonight; it will be given tomorrow.

That is what I understood to be the case. In view of the Honourable the Acting Speaker's reply, Senator Graham consulted me yesterday on what he ought to do, because he had a full program of engagements in Nova Scotia today. On the ground that the Honourable the Acting Speaker had assured us of a ruling today, I urged him to change his plans and remain in Ottawa so that he could hear the ruling and deal with his motion.

I was notified a few moments before 2 o'clock today that there was not to be a ruling and that the Honourable the Acting Speaker would not be in the chamber. Now we have been advised by the Honourable the Speaker *pro tempore* that he will give a ruling on Tuesday next.

I accept that, but I must say that I feel like apologizing to Senator Graham for having accepted the assurance of the Honourable the Acting Speaker that he would give a ruling on this matter today.

I would expect that, since neither the Speaker nor the Speaker *pro tempore* was in the chamber yesterday, we can have a ruling from the Speaker himself on Tuesday.

Hon. Jacques Flynn: I suppose that if Senator MacEachen had accepted my view yesterday Senator Graham could have explained his motion, reserving the right to raise the point of order later.

Senator Doody: Honourable senators, if it is the wish of the chamber—and obviously it is—that we come back on Tuesday, I will put the adjournment motion.

Honourable senators, with leave of the Senate and notwithstanding rule 45(1)(g), I move:

That when the Senate adjourns today, it do stand adjourned until Tuesday next, June 7, 1988 at two o'clock in the afternoon.

Motion agreed to.

QUESTION PERIOD

ENERGY

TAR SANDS PROCESSING PLANT, FORT McMURRAY, ALBERTA— GOVERNMENT'S FINANCIAL COMMITMENT

Hon. H.A. Olson: Honourable senators, I should like to ask the Leader of the Government a question respecting the financing of another oil sands processing plant in Alberta. I did ask the leader a question on this matter on March 16, 1988. At that time he advised me that there were some discussions under way between the federal government, the provincial government and a consortium of private companies known as OSLO, which is considering this plant.

An announcement was made yesterday by the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, the Honourable Marcel Masse, to the effect that he expects that within the next two weeks the government may be able to make a firm announcement, that at the present time apparently the Government of Alberta and the Government of Canada have agreed on a financing package and that both governments are willing to support that package.

Can the Leader of the Government in the Senate tell us what the federal government's commitment is regarding the financing of this operation?